

Cohn's Comment



In his effort to balance the State's budget without seeking new revenue sources, the Governor has targeted one of the most vulnerable segments of our community. For the second year in a row, he has taken aim at the In-Home Supportive Services (IHSS) program.

It is ironic that after decades of putting into place a fiscally sound and morally just alternative to institutional care, the Governor looks to dismantle the IHSS infrastructure just when it is needed most. In his proposed budget, the Governor is trying to reduce State participation in IHSS wages and benefits from \$10.10 an hour to the minimum wage. This erases a decade of livable wage gains and will have a devastating impact on the number of workers available and willing to provide home care services.

Home care workers and their families will be forced deeper into poverty as pay is cut and health care benefits are eliminated. California's overall poverty level will increase as proposed worker pay cuts eliminate progress made in many counties. Recent analysis by an economist found that increased pay to home care workers in San Francisco County reduced the poverty rate by 16 percent; workers currently receive \$10.28 per hour plus health care benefits.

More than 75,000 seniors and people with disabilities whose home care services would be eliminated will be forced into nursing homes or worse, the streets. Lowering home care worker pay to the \$6.75 minimum wage will increase the already high turnover rate as more workers will be forced to leave their clients to find alternative work to support

► **Cohn's Comment:** *Page 2*

Cohn Honors Survivors in Holocaust Remembrance Ceremony

SACRAMENTO – Assemblymember Cohn will preside over the Assembly ceremony to honor Holocaust survivors in commemoration of Yom Hashoah Week on May 4th at 11:00 a.m. Survivors from across California are invited to attend. In preparation for the event, Cohn has inspired high school students from the 24th Assembly District to interview survivors and write essays about their experience. In light of the declining population of Holocaust Survivors, Cohn has made it a priority to give young people direct contact with survivors. These essays are



Survivor Alicia Appleman-Jurman speaks to the Assembly last year

compiled in a booklet and posted on Cohn's website. This is the third year Cohn has conducted the project.

Contact Gabe Gopen for more information at (408) 282-8920 or Gabe.Gopen@asm.ca.gov. ♦

Sex Offenders Pushed Further From Schools

SACRAMENTO – AB 113 authored by Assemblymember Rebecca Cohn passed Assembly Public Safety with bi-partisan support receiving all "AYE" votes. This bill increases the distance that high-risk sex offenders on parole must live from a school.

The bill would prohibit sex offenders from living within ½ of a mile of a school and adds high schools to the prohibited areas. Current law restricts sex offenders from living within ¼ of a mile of schools with

► **Sex Offender Restrictions Increased:** *Page 2*

Community Reacts to Proposed IHSS Budget Cuts



Cohn listens to an IHSS consumer

CAMPBELL – 400 people gathered at the Campbell Community Center to discuss Governor Schwarzenegger's

proposal to reduce wages to In-Home Supportive Services (IHSS) workers on April 22. Assemblymembers Cohn, Lieber, Coto, and Ruskin and Supervisor Beall listened to the citizens' concerns. Over 40 care providers and consumers gave testimony, often overcome with emotion, on how they'd be personally affected by the Governor's proposal.

Contact Jon Kessler for more information at (408) 282-8920 or jon.kessler@asm.ca.gov. ♦

► **Cohn's Comment:** *From Page 2*

their families. The supply of home care workers will further diminish, making it more difficult for consumers to find, recruit, and retain a provider.

Ironically, California is the birthplace of the independent living movement. In the 1960s when Ed Roberts, a person with disabilities, arrived at the University of California, Berkeley and insisted on his right to attend the university, he taught America that all people have the right to participate in society regardless of their physical condition. Mr. Roberts lived in the campus hospital and got around in his wheelchair without benefit of curb cuts, accessible public transportation and so much more.

IHSS is a cost-effective, successful program that was created in 1973 by Governor Ronald Reagan. For 32 years, it has provided the State's growing senior population and people with disabilities with the option to remain safely and independently in the community in their own homes, rather than being forced into more expensive nursing homes. Through the program, caregivers provide personal care services such as feeding, bathing, dressing, house cleaning, laundry and grocery shopping to low-income seniors and people with disabilities. The availability of home care is why California's per capita Medicaid costs are lower than those in other states.

The IHSS system is a nationally recognized model that other states emulate. Survey after survey reflects that most people prefer to stay at home or in their community and do not want to be forced into an institution. In 1999, the U.S. Supreme Court in "Olmstead v. L.C." ruled that unnecessary segregation of people with disabilities in institutions is a form of discrimination in violation of the Americans with Disabilities Act. It is against the law not to offer a choice.

Not only California, but the entire nation, has been working ever since to move people from isolated institutions into the mainstream of society. California established the first model, Regional Centers, a community based infrastructure to provide case management to families with developmental disabilities. The California Association of Public Authorities, an evolution of that system, provides quality services and supports to the nearly 360,000 aging, disabled and blind residents that reside in California. Now more than ever, this vulnerable segment of our community, after so much progress, needs to be protected. ♦

- Rebecca Cohn

Assemblymember.Cohn@assembly.ca.gov

District (408) 282-8920 • Capitol (916) 319-2024

Stranger Danger Camp Comes to Santa Clara in June

SANTA CLARA - Please join Assemblymember Rebecca Cohn on Saturday, June 4th for her bi-annual "Stranger Danger" Camp and Safety Resource Faire. Stranger Danger Camp is geared toward families with children, and features classes for kids on how to be safe in the community as well as a resource faire featuring the area's public safety entities.

The Santa Clara County District Attorney's Office will be doing free child ID kits the day of the event. These ID kits include digital fingerprints, a photograph and a DNA swab for parents to have on hand in case the unthinkable should happen.



Cohn with friends at last year's Stranger Danger Camp

Stranger Danger Camp will be held at the Santa Clara Central Park Library, located at 2635 Homestead Road in Santa Clara, and will run from 10 a.m. - 2 p.m. with the "Stranger Danger" classes being offered hourly on the half hour. Contact Julie Lind for more information at (408) 282-8920 or Julie.Lind@asm.ca.gov ♦

Health Faire Focuses on Diabetes, Obesity



Barb Stone screens Cohn for diabetes

SAN JOSE - Assemblymember Cohn hosted her first Health and Wellness Resource Faire of 2005 on April 23 to help raise awareness of the

alarming rates of diabetes and obesity in children, women and seniors. The Faire included free health screenings, community outreach services, workshops and health information from over 30 organizations.

Over 200 people attended the Faire at the Willows Senior Center. An estimated 50 people had their blood pressure and body fat tested, and over 125 people were screened for diabetes. ♦

► Sex Offender Restrictions Increased *From Page 1*

grades K-8. Increasing the distance that these sex offenders must live from schools will provide greater protection to the most defenseless in our society - our children.

Cohn stated, "High-risk sex offenders commit some of the most horrendous sex crimes, which is why I want them to be as far away from schools as possible. This bill puts a ½ mile safe zone around our schools giving parents a greater sense of security."

The State has already recognized that these specific offenders are dangerous by classifying them as high-risk and placing them on specialized parole supervision. A high-risk sex offender has already established a pattern of deviant sexual behavior, and has other sexual offenses in their background with the offenses clearly being deviant and sexually oriented.

"The children of the State of California deserve to be safe while at school. I am not willing to take a chance and give these sex offenders easy access to our innocent children," Assemblymember Cohn declared. ♦